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SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 06//06

INDEX:

- (1) Poll of all lawmakers on history: 61% see Tokyo Trials as unreasonable but unavoidable; 67% say war against US reckless choice
- (2) US Consul General Reich to leave post on July 12; Maher to succeed him
- (3) Ex-Pentagon Japan chief stresses Japan-US alliance
- (4) Taepodong missile: Japan, US begin to eye possibility of vigilance becoming protracted; US speeding up consolidation of MD system to counter Pyongyang's intimidation
- (5) LDP's spending cuts plan to become basis for budgetary request guidelines for FY2007
- (6) All eyes are on Koizumi, who may visit Yasukuni Shrine on August 15
- (7) Post-Koizumi diplomatic strategy after end of honeymoon-like Japan-US relations (Part 2): Koizumi's Asia strategy turns out fruitless
- (8) Editorial: Emissions trading system -- Do not lose sight of the goal

ARTICLES:

(1) Poll of all lawmakers on history: 61% see Tokyo Trials as unreasonable but unavoidable; 67% say war against US reckless choice

MAINICHI (Top play) (Full)  
June 25, 2006

The Mainichi Shimbun conducted a questionnaire survey of all lawmakers in both Diet chambers to probe into their perceptions of history. According to its findings tabulated yesterday, 61% of those who responded to the survey said the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, or the so-called Tokyo Trials, was unreasonable but unavoidable because Japan was defeated in World War II. They raised a question about the trial's legitimacy but indicated that Japan had no choice but to accept the trials.

In the Diet survey, respondents were asked about the opening of war with the United States. In response to this question, 67% answered that it was a reckless choice. Meanwhile, 83% were positive about Japan's postwar stance of arming itself lightly and setting store on its economic growth. However, the survey also showed the differing stances of political parties over the war.

In the survey, respondents were asked about the Tokyo Trials. In response to this question, 61% answered that the Tokyo Trials were unreasonable but unavoidable because Japan had no choice but to accept them. Among other answers, 8% said the Tokyo Trials were unreasonable, as the winners of World War II unilaterally tried the losers, with 13% saying the Tokyo Trials were justifiable, because those to blame for the war were tried. Broken down into major political parties, about two-thirds of respondents in each of the Liberal Democratic Party, the Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto), and the New Komeito said the Tokyo Trials were unreasonable but

TOKYO 00003552 002 OF 009

SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 06//06

unavoidable. However, 61% of the Japanese Communist Party and 77% of the Social Democratic Party (Shaminto) chose to answer that the Tokyo trials were justifiable.

In addition, respondents were also asked about the opening of war with the United States. In response to this question, 18% answered that it was an unavoidable choice, with 67% saying it was a reckless choice. Respondents were further asked if they thought Japan conducted acts of aggression in its war with China. In response, 68% answered "yes," with 3% saying "no" and 19% saying they "can't say which."

Next, respondents were asked if they thought the Japanese government has apologized and reflected enough over WWII. In response to this question, "yes" accounted for 51%, with "no" reaching 33%. Meanwhile, 26% were in favor of the prime minister's visits to Yasukuni Shrine, with 55% raising objections.

Among those who were positive about Japan's postwar economy-oriented posture, 66% said Japan should maintain this posture, with 27% saying Japan should change it. In the LDP, 35% were in favor of changing it.

In the meantime, respondents were asked if they thought Article 9 of the Constitution of Japan should be amended. In response to this question, 50% answered "yes," with 25% saying "no." Asked about the right of collective self-defense, answers from respondents were split, with 42% insisting that Japan should be allowed to exercise the right and 41% saying Japan should not be allowed to use the right, as it is currently prohibited from doing.

Asked about Japan's diplomacy, 73% said Japan should attach much more importance to Asia in its foreign relations while keeping bilateral relations with the United States as its basis, with 55% insisting on the necessity of giving top priority to improving Japan's relations with China and South Korea.

The questionnaire was sent to all 720 Dietmembers, broken down into 478 in the House of Representatives and 242 in the House of Councillors. The retrieval rate was 53.3% (58% in the lower house,

45% in the upper house). In the breakdown of respondents, there were 163 persons (40% ) from the LDP, 120 persons (63% ) from the DPJ, 47 persons (85% ) from the New Komeito, 18 persons (100% ) from the JCP, 13 persons (100% ) from the SDP, and 23 persons (59% ) from other parties or independents.

(2) US Consul General Reich to leave post on July 12; Maher to succeed him

Ryukyu Shimpo (Page 2) (Full)  
June 27, 2007

The US Consulate General in Okinawa announced yesterday that Consul General Thomas Reich would leave his post on July 12 and he would assume a post in charge of congressional affairs in the East Asia and Pacific Bureau of the State Department. Kevin Maher, chief of the Security Policy Unit of the US Embassy, who was in charge of the realignment of US forces in Japan, will succeed Reich.

Reich assumed his post in September 2003. He stressed that the US Marines Futenma Air Station should be relocated to somewhere in Okinawa. He stated in an interview: "In order to maintain deterrence, the helicopter unit and combat force of US Marines

TOKYO 00003552 003 OF 009

SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 06//06

should be stationed in Okinawa."

(3) Ex-Pentagon Japan chief stresses Japan-US alliance

OKINAWA TIMES (Page 2) (Full)  
June 26, 2006

Robin Sakoda, former senior country director for Japan at the US Department of Defense, spoke on his outlook for the Japan-US alliance at a hotel in the city of Naha, Okinawa Prefecture, on June 23 under the co-sponsorship of the Okinawa Association of Corporate Executives (Okinawa Keizai Doyukai) and the US Consul General in Okinawa. In his speech, Sakoda stressed the importance of strengthening the Japan-US alliance.

Touching on China's military modernization, Sakoda noted that China has not given sufficient explanations about it. "That's a matter of concern to Japan and the United States," Sakoda said.

Sakoda also played up high tensions between Japan, the United States, and China in the economic area, particularly in exploring energy resources.

In the meantime, Sakoda welcomed Japan's efforts over the past several years to make the Japan-US alliance function in an effective way. In addition, the former Pentagon official also referred to challenges facing the alliance. He specified Japan's self-imposed prohibition against the right of collective self-defense, saying it is frustrating to the United States and is also difficult. He remarked that it would be possible for Japan and the United States to carry out defense cooperation in an easier way even without such restrictions. He also indicated that the two countries could push ahead with defense cooperation while setting specific conditions according to circumstances.

Sakoda also said the United States respects Japan's present inability to use the right of collective self-defense. "The strength of our bilateral alliance does not depend on this constraint, because we will find out what we should do in the present situation," he added.

(4) Taepodong missile: Japan, US begin to eye possibility of vigilance becoming protracted; US speeding up consolidation of MD system to counter Pyongyang's intimidation

SANKEI (Page 2) (Excerpts)  
June 26, 2006

Tokyo and Washington, which are now increasing their vigilance over North Korea's preparations for the launch of a long-range ballistic

missile Taepodong-2, have begun considering that the standoff could be protracted. In an effort to foil the North's preparations to launch a Taepodong missile, Washington is now speeding up efforts to establish a missile defense system around Japan, which is to become the central front in defending its mainland.

The governments of Japan and the US are still maintaining the highest level of vigilance a week after the tensions peaked. In order to track a ballistic missile, two of the US Navy's Aegis ships have been deployed around Japan in addition to two Maritime Self-Defense Force's (MSDF) Aegis ships.

The US military's RC135S airborne intelligence platform (Cobra Ball)

TOKYO 00003552 004 OF 009

SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 06//06

that collects signaling information and the Air Self-Defense Force's YS11E intelligence aircraft are continuing monitoring to determine whether North Korea has injected liquid fuel into the Taepodong-2.

Following the start of preparations for the launch of a Taepodong-2, which has the US mainland within its range, the US military has decided to speed up the building of the MD system around Japan. According to a government source, the US is ready to take every means in order to fill gaps in the defense of its mainland, which will lead to enhancing Japan's deterrence capability against Nodong missiles and medium-range ballistic missiles.

Though the US Army had originally intended to deploy the mobile early warning X-band radar system around August, it has already delivered it to the Air Self-Defense (ASDF) Shariki Detachment base in Aomori Prefecture on June 23. Its test operations will start as early as on the 26th. This radar is excellent for monitoring because of its long range, which markedly enhances the MD system's monitoring capability, by complementing Aegis ships' radar.

Coordination is also under way for the deployment before year's end of ground-based Patriot missiles (PAC-3) that intercept ballistic missiles. The first deployment will be at Kadena Air Base in Okinawa Prefecture.

The USS Shiloh, which succeeded in an intercept test carried out near Hawaii on the 22nd, will be deployed at Yokosuka Navy Base, Kanagawa Prefecture, for the first time as a sea-based vessel capable of using the SM3.

(5) LDP's spending cuts plan to become basis for budgetary request guidelines for FY2007

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Full)  
June 27, 2006

The expectation is that spending cuts over the next five years adopted under the leadership of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) will become the basis for guidelines for fiscal 2007 budget appropriation requests. It seems that the stage of drafting budget request ceilings has now moved from the Finance Ministry to the LDP. However, since the next government, which will be launched after the September LDP presidential election, will be in charge of giving shape to the spending cuts, it is uncertain whether the LDP will be able continue to take the lead in drafting budgetary request guidelines.

LDP Policy Research Council Chairman Hidenao Nakagawa underscored the significance of the spending cuts plan in a joint meeting yesterday of the spending reform project team and other groups. He categorically said:

"It is the first time for our party to carry out a full-fledged discussion on spending cuts on specific areas. Bureaucrats might never have expected that we would be able to formulate such a neat spending cuts plan."

It has been the practice for the Finance Ministry to draft before the end of July budget request ceilings for expenditures for social security, public works, and investments, among other things. Based

on the budget request ceilings, the ministries and agencies present their own budgetary requests to the Finance Ministry in August and the Finance Ministry assesses all budget requests.

TOKYO 00003552 005 OF 009

SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 06//06

The LDP plan covers spending cuts over the next five years. It can be said that the plan including such specific spending cuts as a 1% -3% cut in public works is similar to budgetary request ceilings. The Finance Ministry actually gave the LDP full support in drafting the spending cuts. The ministry intends to draft budget ceilings based on the LDP's spending cuts plan soon after the basic policy for FY2006 is adopted in early July.

In a meeting yesterday of the LDP lawmakers from both Diet chambers, the view was raised that the spending cuts plan should not be a prerequisite for financial policy for the next five years. With an eye on the post-Koizumi era, ministries and agencies, excluding the Finance Ministry, stood apart from the work of drafting spending cuts. Whether the LDP will be able to take charge of drafting budgetary ceilings will be decided by the next government.

(6) All eyes are on Koizumi, who may visit Yasukuni Shrine on August 15

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Abridged)  
June 27, 2006

Attention is focused on whether Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi will visit Yasukuni Shrine on the August 15 end-of-the-war anniversary this year. A visit that day would be certain to draw outcries from China and South Korea and escalate into a campaign issue in the Liberal Democratic Party's presidential election in September. Although paying homage at the controversial shrine on August 15 is Koizumi's public pledge, its negative aspects have been mentioned quite often. Koizumi is expected to make up his mind by weighing the gravity of his public pledge against possible negative impacts on the country's foreign policy, the LDP presidential race, and other matters.

Koizumi said to reporters at his official residence yesterday:

"At the June 23 memorial service held in Okinawa to commemorate the end of the Battle of Okinawa, a representative of bereaved families said in his speech: 'We appreciate the prime minister's annual visits to Yasukuni Shrine. We hope the prime minister will continue visiting the shrine.' There are all sorts of opinions, however."

Koizumi has always said: "I will make an appropriate decision."

He has avoided visiting the shrine on August 15 so as not to stir up strong anti-Japanese sentiment in China and South Korea. That strategy has proven unsuccessful. A Japan-China summit meeting has not occurred since April 2005.

Speculation is afoot that given the situation, Koizumi will pay homage at Yasukuni on August 15 this year, his last year as prime minister, to fulfill his public pledge.

In anticipation of Koizumi's shrine visit on August 15, China has tried to constrain Japan. Chinese State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan on June 23 urged visiting LDP Upper House Secretary General Toranosuke Katayama to prevent a shrine visit, saying: "We would like to see the immediate political obstacle removed."

A shrine visit by Koizumi on August 15 is likely to have a significant impact on the LDP presidential election in September.

TOKYO 00003552 006 OF 009

SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 06//06

Many LDP members say that a visit would give an advantage to former Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda, who is critical of the shrine

visits. "Criticism of the prime minister's unbending approach will give impetus to Fukuda's standpoint," a former cabinet minister predicted. Lawmakers supporting Fukuda are eager to field him for revamping Japan's Asia policy.

The matter is particularly taxing for Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe, who is supportive of Koizumi's visits.

Asked if he would visit the controversial shrine if he became prime minister, Abe said: "I would rather not discuss where I stand so that the matter will not escalate into a diplomatic issue." He apparently wants to prevent anti-Abe forces from rallying together under the anti-Yasukuni banner.

In the event Koizumi visits the shrine on August 15, Abe would be pressed harder for a clear response to the matter as a leading candidate to take over from Koizumi.

A former cabinet minister thinks Koizumi will give up on visiting the shrine in consideration of Abe.

(7) Post-Koizumi diplomatic strategy after end of honeymoon-like Japan-US relations (Part 2): Koizumi's Asia strategy turns out fruitless

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Full)  
June 27, 2006

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi was once eager to improve the strained relations with China.

In a meeting at the Prime Minister's Official Resident on a visit by the prime minister to Marco Polo Bridge in China planned for in October 2001, Koizumi said regarding a visit to the Chinese People's Anti-Japanese War Museum: "I will go. I am not right wing." Citing that materials showing cruel deeds by the Imperial Japanese Army are displayed in the museum, some voiced opposition to the visit to the museum. Dismissing such opposition, however, the prime minister added: "I must also pay respect to those who died as a result of cruel acts by Japanese soldiers."

With the aim of restoring Japan's strained relations with China and South Korea in the wake of Koizumi's visit to Yasukuni Shrine on August 13 of the same year, Koizumi visited the Chinese People's Anti-Japanese War Museum and the Sotaemum Dongnimgongwon in Seoul, where the prime minister offered his apology for Japan's past aggression and colonial policy. Over the year from the visits in October 2001 to China and South Korea through his surprise trip to North Korea in September 2002, the prime minister conducted a vigorous foreign policy toward East Asia.

In January 2002, Prime Minister Koizumi made a round of visits to five ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) member countries. In Singapore, he proposed a plan to establish an expanded East Asian Community.

In a speech in Boao, China, in April, Koizumi said: "China's economic development is not a threat but a good opportunity," pleasing the Chinese government.

Immediately after his China tour, though, the prime minister visited

TOKYO 00003552 007 OF 009

SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 06//06

Yasukuni Shrine again, damaging relations between Japan and China once again. In September, he made an epoch-making visit to North Korea, but relations between Japan and North Korea also remained at impasse over the abduction issue. In the latter half of his tenure in office, Prime Minister Koizumi's policy toward Asia has been labeled a "failure."

Then Foreign Ministry's Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau Director General Hitoshi Tanaka commented: "We aimed to conduct an active policy toward East Asia, based on solid Japan-US relations. But Prime Minister Koizumi's visits to Yasukuni Shrine destroyed this strategy. I really regret it."

The Yasukuni issue blew up the possibility of improvement in the strained relations between Japan and China. This stance will be also reflected in the summit between Prime Minister Koizumi and US President Bush on June 29.

The two leaders plan to issue a joint statement in which both sides will stress that Japan and the US share such values as freedom, democracy, the rule of law, and human rights. A senior Foreign Ministry official said: "This must be a powerful message to China. China has lashed out at Japan by playing the history card, but it has been feared that Japan, in cooperation with the US, would use the democracy card or the human-rights card."

The US is arranging to give the red-carpet treatment to the Japanese prime minister, in contrast to Chinese President Hu Jintao's official visit to the US this April. For Hu, President Bush held a luncheon. For Koizumi, however, the president is arranging a banquet. He is also planning to go with Koizumi to Memphis by his personal plane, Air Force One, and take him to Graceland himself.

The US administration's evaluation of China, though, is not always consistent. The "Quarterly Review of the Nation's Defense Policy" released this February defined China as "a country at a strategic crossroads."

When former Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda visited the US recently and met with prominent US government officials, some, including Vice President Cheney, reportedly voiced concern about the current strained relations between Japan and China. Japan has yet to completely read the real intentions of Washington.

"Japan and China are vying with each other in a beauty contest in front of the US," a senior Foreign Ministry official said in a tone of self-mockery. The remark implies that the two countries are making an active pitch to the US in a bid to become the leader of East Asia. With political tensions added to the contest, their strife gives the impression to their neighbors that they are fighting for superiority.

Only three months are left before Prime Minister steps down as prime minister. The task of reconstructing an Asia strategy is likely to be undertaken by the next prime minister.

(8) Editorial: Emissions trading system -- Do not lose sight of the goal

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 5) (Full)  
June 27, 2006

It is the rainy season now, but the weather does not look like the

TOKYO 00003552 008 OF 009

SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 06//06

rainy season, showing signs of climate change. The government will start buying carbon-emissions-rights from July in order to comply with the Kyoto Protocol. However, it is not easy to cut carbon emissions by 14% from the level of the base year of 1990.

A report compiled by the Environment Ministry noted that the total domestic emissions of global warming gasses in fiscal 2004 dropped 0.2% from the preceding year.

Emissions of carbon dioxide in fiscal 2004 stood on the same level as that of the previous year at 1.279 billion tons. Among six kinds of gasses subject to cuts under the Kyoto Protocol, emissions of a freon gas substitute and other gasses dropped a total of 12%, keeping Japan's emissions from increasing.

Compared with the base year of fiscal 1990, overall greenhouse gas emissions increased 8% -- 31.5% in the household sector due to a rise in power consumption and 52.6% in the auto sector.

Judging from those figures, it is apparently difficult for Japan to meet its commitment of cutting emissions 6% from the 1990 level over five years starting in 2007.

Given the situation, attention is being paid to the Kyoto Protocol mechanisms designed to make up for portions of cuts that cannot be attained through domestic measures with market principles, in particular, the clean development mechanism (CDM).

Under the mechanism, industrialized countries, which are obligated to cut greenhouse gas emissions under the Protocol, provide developing countries, which have no such obligation, state-of-the-art technologies and carry out projects that contribute to cutting emissions. The industrialized countries can then credit the amount of cuts achieved to themselves.

The Japanese government plans to cover 1.6% in cuts that cannot be achieved by purchasing emissions rights through the CDM. The revised Global Warming Countermeasures Promotion Law was enacted in the previous Diet session, paving the way for purchases of such rights.

What should be kept in mind before actually purchasing such rights is that the Kyoto mechanism is a supplement to domestic measures. It should be a last resort.

Promoting the CDM will never stem greenhouse gas emissions by industrialized countries.

It is fine for the government and companies to be motivated by the CDM market. It is also important to transfer technologies to developing countries. However, they should not neglect domestic measures, blinded by projects that can be carried out in developing countries at low cost, and give priority to cutting costs of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The market likes going its own way. The prices of emissions rights are already showing signs of going up. There has also appeared a move to integrate such rights into financial products.

No matter how such a market flourishes, it is just a means to prevent global warming. We would like to aim for quality CDM projects, reaffirming this major premise.

The figures shown at the outset clearly indicate that not only the

TOKYO 00003552 009 OF 009

SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 06//06

state and companies but also the household sector have yet to take more measures to meet the pledge under the Kyoto Protocol.

DONOVAN